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CNS, CIA and FBI

PENTHOUSE magazine in its current issue has published an article by two freelancers who assert that they have discovered that from 1953 until 1973 the Copley News Service and the Copley newspapers "acted as intelligence arms of the Central Intelligence Agency and the Federal Bureau of Investigation."

Many of the allegations have been made before and denied before. It is not our purpose here to analyze the article and call attention to its obvious deficiencies as a piece of investigative journalism.

Instead we would state our present policy.

The reporter's job is a useful one only to the extent that he earns and retains confidence that his reports are full and fair and unbiased by any prejudice affecting his news judgment.

Reporters frequently work closely with law enforcement officers and other public officials but the reporter must always remain independent of them in order to do his job for the benefit of society.

Reporters or photographers who function as government agents jeopardize the all-important public confidence which is

essential to the performance of their duties.

It must be noted that in case of a national emergency threatening the Constitution, newsmen like all other loyal citizens enlist for the duration and offer the government full cooperation.

The decision as to when a national emergency is serious enough to justify abandoning journalistic independence will always remain subject to the limited wisdom of newsmen.

Times have changed. Most newsmen would be less likely now to see such a crisis arising than they were 20 years ago. We are more confident of our free democracy and less trusting in the government.

We envision the press as a great free and independent force in public affairs, chained and regulated only by its continual sense of responsibility and accountability to the people.

Obviously such a press cannot function as a creature of the government — especially not in any secret or undercover role.

The press cannot serve two masters. If it is to serve the people truly, it cannot secretly serve the government.